this House do proceed to elect, in such manner as the Chairman may direct, one Member from among the Members of the House to be a member of the General Council of the Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad.

The question was put and the motion was adopted.

The Joint Committee on Offices of Profit

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI M. VEERAPPA MOILY): Sir, I move the following Motion:—

That this House concurs in the recommendation of the Lok Sabha that a Joint Committee of the Houses to be called the Joint Committee on Offices of Profit be constituted for the purposes set out in the Motion adopted by the Lok Sabha at its sitting held on the 27th July, 2009 and communicated to this House, and resolves that this House do join in the said Joint Committee and proceed to elect, in accordance with the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote, five Members from among the Members of the House to serve on the said Joint Committee.

The question was put and the motion was adopted.

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STATEMENT REGARDING GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY; THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF EARTH SCIENCES; THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS; AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): With your permission, Sir, I rise to announce that Government Business during the week commencing Monday, the 3rd August, 2009 will consist of:—

1. Consideration of any item of Government Business carried over from today's Order Paper.
2. Consideration and passing of the Constitution (One Hundred and Ninth Amendment) Bill, 2009.
3. Consideration and passing of the Rubber (Amendment) Bill, 2009, after it is passed by Lok Sabha.

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STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Import of raw and white/refined sugar

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): Sir, the production of sugar in the current 2008-09 sugar season is provisionally estimated in the range of 150-155 lakh tones as

compared to about 263 lakh tonnes of sugar produced in 2007-08 sugar season. The lower production of sugar in the current sugar season has put pressure on sugar prices. The Central Government had taken a slew of measures to augment domestic stocks of sugar and moderate sugar prices. The Government has again reviewed the position.

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY (West Bengal): Sir, the copy of the statement is not there.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Distribute the copy of the statement.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: It will be distributed after the statement is made, Sir.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It should be distributed simultaneously.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: We are supposed to discuss it on Tuesday.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, no. It is not like that. It was listed at 5 O'clock before the House rises. But the hon. Minister has requested that it should be taken up early. So, he is making a statement. Copies will be circulated. But, clarifications on this will be taken up on Tuesday. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN (Kerala): Sir, we have a convention of distributing the copies of the Statement.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: He is reading. Copies are coming to all of you. ...*(Interruptions)*... Yes, clarifications will be taken up on Tuesday. ...*(Interruptions)*... No Zero Hour today please.

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR: The Government had, in January 2009, decided to allow duty free import of raw sugar by sugar factories up to 30.09.2009 under the Advance Authorisation Scheme. Thereafter, in April 2009, it had opened up duty free import of raw sugar by sugar factories under OGL up to 01.08.09. The Government has now decided to extend the terminal date for import of duty free raw sugar under Open General Licence (OGL) by sugar factories from 01.08.09 to 31.03.10.

The import of raw sugar has also been opened up to the private trade up to 31.03.10 for being processed by domestic factories on job basis.

Like in earlier case of duty free raw sugar imports under AAS and OGL by sugar factories allowed up to 30.09.09 and 01.08.09 respectively, the imports of raw sugar under OGL up to the extended date of 31.03.10 by sugar factories and private trade have been kept free of levy obligations. Further, accelerated release of processed sugar made from raw sugar would be allowed but if the concerned importer does not sell the processed sugar within the prescribed period, it shall be converted into levy sugar.

The Government had, in April 2009, also decided to allow duty free import of white/refined sugar under OGL up to 10 lakh tonnes by designated agencies, namely, STC/MMTC/PEC/ NAFED till 01.08.09. This has now been extended up to 30.11.09. Furthermore, the duty free

import of white/refined sugar under OGL has been opened to other Central/State Government agencies and to private trade in addition to existing designated agencies.

Like in the case of existing duty free import of white/refined sugar under OGL by designated agencies up to 01.08.09, import of white/refined sugar by such agencies up to the extended date of 30.11.09 as well as similar imports by other Central/State Government agencies and private trade up to that date have been kept free of regulated release mechanism as well as levy obligation.

It is expected that with these decisions, domestic availability of sugar would get further augmented and sugar prices in the country would remain at reasonable levels.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We will take up further discussion on the working of the Ministry of External Affairs. As announced yesterday, there are two hon. Members left who will participate in the discussion. One is the Leader of Opposition and the other is Shri Sitaram Yechury. As they were not there yesterday, they had requested to be accommodated today. Afterwards there will be a reply by the hon. Minister. I would like to just remind that by 1 o'clock the reply and the intervention should be completed.

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DISCUSSION ON THE WORKING OF THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS—

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY (West Bengal): Thank you, Sir. I will keep the time constraint in mind. Thank you very much for giving me this opportunity today. Sir, a very fruitful discussion took place yesterday and a very serious concern has been expressed by the hon. Members cutting across the entire political spectrum in this House about which way the Indian foreign policy is going. This is a serious concern for us because we think that progressively we are moving into a situation where we are moving away from our independent foreign policy and are ending up being a subordinate ally of the USA and US imperialism. There are a series of statements that have come from this Government since it assumed office and that are a cause of concern.

The hon. Minister for External Affairs had informed this House, "We (meaning India and the USA) have also agreed on a bilateral dialogue architecture within which we will continue discussions between our two countries on a wide range of issues." These wide range of issues are connected not only with the fact that the assurance, given by the Prime Minister on the Indo-US Civil Nuclear Deal saying that we will get full civil nuclear cooperation, has now been negated. But it does not confine itself only to that area, it moves across all the major issues that are important in the world today, including climate change, the Doha Round of talks as far as the WTO is concerned, and the non-proliferation architecture to which we are being subjected to a lot of pressures.